UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1995/44
28 November 1994

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-first session
Item 11 of the provisional agenda

FURTHER PROMOTION AND ENCOURAGEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE QUESTION OF THE PROGRAMME AND METHODS OF WORK OF THE COMMISSION

Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region

Report of the Secretary-General submitted in accordance with paragraph 15 of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/48

GE.94-14906 (E)

Introduction

1. In its resolution 1994/48 of 4 March 1994 entitled "Regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region", the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to maintain a continuing flow of human rights materials to the library of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and encouraged all States members and associate members of ESCAP and other parties to make full use of the depository centre of that organization. The Commission once again encouraged United Nations development agencies in the Asian and Pacific region to coordinate with ESCAP and other United Nations agencies in their efforts to promote the human rights dimension in their activities.

2. The Commission welcomed the regional workshops on various human rights issues which had been held in the Asian and Pacific region, including the first Workshop for the Asian and Pacific Region on Human Rights, held at Manila from 7 to 11 May 1990, and the second Workshop for the Asian and Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues, held at Jakarta from 26 to 28 January 1993, which focused on national institutions and regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights. It encouraged all States in the region to consider further the establishment of such regional arrangements, taking into account the various approaches and mechanisms identified in the Chairman's concluding remarks at the Jakarta workshop. The Commission endorsed the decision of the Government of the Republic of Korea to host an Asia-Pacific regional meeting in 1994 at Seoul on the region's consultative mechanism and requested the Secretary-General to facilitate the realization of the decision of the Government of the Republic of Korea to hold that meeting under the regular budget for advisory services and technical assistance.

3. The Commission appealed to all Governments in the Asian and Pacific region to consider making use of the possibility offered by the United Nations to organize, under the programme of advisory services and technical assistance for the promotion and protection of human rights, information and/or training courses at the national or regional level for appropriate government personnel on the application of international human rights standards and the experience of relevant national and international organs. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to give adequate attention to the countries in the region as regards benefiting from all the activities under the programme of advisory services and technical assistance, particularly in the light of interest in the region in developing national institutions and regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights. It also encouraged all States in the region to consider ratifying and acceding to international human rights instruments adopted within the framework of the United Nations system, with the aim of universal acceptance.

4. The Commission requested the Secretary-General to consult the States in the Asian and Pacific region on the widest possible basis in the implementation of resolution 1994/48, and to submit to the Commission at its fifty-first session a report incorporating information on the progress achieved in the implementation of that resolution. The present report is

submitted in accordance with that request. Information on the status of ratification of the principal international human rights instruments by States of the region is attached to the report as annex I.

I. COOPERATION WITH THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC

5. In a letter dated 3 August 1994 addressed to the Executive Secretary of ESCAP, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, referring to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/48, drew his attention to paragraph 3 in which the Commission encouraged United Nations development agencies to coordinate their efforts with ESCAP and other United Nations agencies to promote the human rights dimension in their activities, and to paragraph 9 which appealed to all Governments in the Asian and Pacific region to consider making use of the possibility of advisory services and technical assistance for the promotion and protection of human rights, information and/or training courses at the national or regional level for appropriate government personnel on the application on international human rights standards and the experience of relevant national and international organs. The High Commissioner also drew the attention of the Executive Secretary to paragraph 2 of the above-mentioned resolution in which the Commission encouraged all States members and associate members of ESCAP and other parties to make full use of the depository centre of that organization. ESCAP was also asked for an assessment of the usefulness and utilization of the human rights documents which had been forwarded to it by the Centre for Human Rights and to indicate any further documentation that it deemed appropriate to be sent. As of 15 November 1994, no reply has been received from ESCAP.

II. INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES IN THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

6. By letters dated 3 August 1994, the High Commissioner for Human Rights informed the United Nations development agencies in the Asian and Pacific region about the relevant paragraphs of resolution 1994/48 and requested them to forward any relevant information concerning their activities. As of 15 November 1994, no reply had been received.

III. CONSULTATION WITH THE COUNTRIES OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION

A. Views of States of the Asian and Pacific region and the United Nations on the implementation of Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/48

7. In a note verbale dated 18 July 1994, the Secretary-General drew the attention of Governments to relevant paragraphs of resolution 1994/48 and requested them to forward their views on the implementation of the resolution. As of 15 November 1994, replies had been received from Bangladesh and China.

Bangladesh

8. By note verbale of 19 October 1994, the Permanent Mission of the People's Republic of Bangladesh provided information relating to the implementation of

resolution 1994/48. The Mission stated that Bangladesh had participated in the third United Nations Workshop for the Asian and Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues. It further noted that:

> "Bangladesh encourages efforts undertaken in the Asia-Pacific region for [the] establishment of regional arrangements for promotion and protection of human rights on [a] step-by-step basis. Bangladesh firmly believes that institution of appropriate measures to alleviate poverty and socio-economic deprivation is a sine qua non for creating [the] congenial climate for [the] proper functioning of such an organization. ... [The] Bangladesh Government is actively supporting dissemination of relevant information about universal standards of human rights at the national level through various mechanisms. Consideration is being given to [making] ... government personnel, particularly the ones involved in [the] maintenance of law and order, ... more responsive to ... human rights."

The note also drew attention to the Convention on Terrorism that had been adopted within the framework of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation and provided a list of international human rights conventions ratified and acceded to by Bangladesh.

China

9. In its reply dated 7 September 1994, the Government of the People's Republic of China noted that its active participation in the third United Nations Workshop for the Asian and Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues was a positive experience, as it believed that "an exchange of experiences and views between the representatives of the various States of the region on an equal and well-intentioned basis will promote international cooperation in the domain of human rights within the region".

10. With specific regard to regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights, it was observed that:

> "The Chinese Government considers that, Asia being the world's largest and most populous region, the various countries in it are of different cultural, historical and traditional hues, uneven levels of economic development and multifarious political systems and social orders. Hence one cannot, in making regional arrangements to promote and defend human rights, blindly imitate the rigid models of other regions; one can, however, study and draw upon the beneficial experiences of other regions to create human rights machinery attuned to the distinguishing characteristics of the region and the needs of each nation, machinery that is consonant with the actual conditions in the Asian and Pacific region and that individual Governments and peoples are able and willing to accept.
>
> "Given the actual situation in the Asian and Pacific region, it would not be practical to establish uniform machinery for promoting and protecting human rights in a short space of time. The most feasible and effective approach at present would be for individual countries in the

region to continue to strengthen their contacts and cooperation on human rights questions, build up reciprocal understanding, develop extensive consultations and prepare the ground for a regional human rights mechanism. China is willing to make its contribution for the promotion of such contacts within the region and to play a positive part in the discussion of the matters concerned."

Third United Nations Workshop for the Asian and Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues

11. Pursuant to Commission on Human Rights resolution 1994/48, the Centre for Human Rights organized, in cooperation with the Government of the Republic of Korea, the third United Nations Workshop for the Asian and Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues, which was held at Seoul from 18 to 20 July 1994. The workshop was organized under the Centre's programme of advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights. In particular, the workshop built on the achievements of the second workshop held at Jakarta.

12. The three central objectives of the workshop were:

(a) To explore possibilities for the establishment of regional arrangements for the promotion and protection of human rights;

(b) To review progress in the development of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in the region;

(c) To follow up on a number of issues raised at the World Conference on Human Rights, in particular, the elaboration of national action plans for promoting and protecting human rights as recommended by the World Conference; the development of strategies for human rights education in the Asian and Pacific region; and means to encourage ratification of human rights treaties by countries in this region.

13. Nine international experts with specialized knowledge in the above fields served as resource persons for the workshop. The following countries participated in the workshop: Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Japan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Korea, Samoa, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vanuatu and Viet Nam. Observers from several international intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations and Governments of other regions also attended the workshop.

14. The workshop was opened by the High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea. In his opening speech, the Minister proposed that workshops for the Asian and Pacific region be organized on a regular basis. This proposal received broad endorsement from the participants. The substantive conclusions and recommendations of the workshop are contained in the Chairman's concluding remarks, which are attached to this report as annex II.

B. Contacts between countries of the Asian and Pacific region and the United Nations

15. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the Centre for Human Rights have pursued and strengthened their contacts and cooperation in the field of human rights with the countries of the Asian and Pacific region, through the programme of advisory services and technical assistance.

Bhutan

16. From 27 to 30 July 1994, the High Commissioner for Human Rights visited the Kingdom of Bhutan. During the visit, the High Commissioner was received by His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck. His Majesty and the High Commissioner discussed the role of the United Nations in assisting Bhutan in the strengthening of the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. They also discussed the question of the refugee camps in Nepal. The High Commissioner also met with a number of ministers and other officials, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister of the Interior. During these meetings, possible forms of technical cooperation on human rights between the Centre for Human Rights and Bhutan were discussed. The Centre for Human Rights is currently developing a programme for advisory services and technical assistance to Bhutan.

Cambodia

17. In resolution 1993/6, the Commission on Human Rights requested the Secretary-General to ensure a continued United Nations human rights presence in Cambodia after the expiry of the mandate of the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC), inter alia, through the operational presence of the Centre for Human Rights. In the same resolution, it also requested the Secretary-General to appoint a Special Representative for Cambodia.

18. Pursuant to resolution 1993/6, the Centre for Human Rights established its office in Phnom Penh on 1 October 1993. According to this resolution, the mandate of the Centre for Human Rights in Cambodia includes the following elements: (a) to manage the implementation of educational and technical assistance and advisory services programmes and to ensure their continuation; (b) to assist the Government of Cambodia established after the election, at its request, in meeting its obligations under the human rights instruments acceded to, including the preparation of reports to the relevant monitoring committees; (c) to provide support to bona fide human rights groups in Cambodia; (d) to contribute to the creation and/or strengthening of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights; (e) to continue to assist with the drafting and implementation of legislation to promote and protect human rights; (f) to continue to assist with the training of persons responsible for the administration of justice.

19. On 23 November 1993 the Secretary-General appointed Mr. Justice Michael Kirby (Australia) as Special Representative for human rights for Cambodia. Information on the activities carried out by Justice Kirby between August 1994 and January 1995, as well as more detailed information on the activities of the office of the Centre for Human Rights in Cambodia in the same period can be found in the report of the

Special Representative (E/CN.4/1995/87) and the report of the Secretary-General on advisory services and technical assistance in the field of human rights (E/CN.4/1995/89).

20. From 24 to 26 July 1994, the High Commissioner for Human Rights made a visit to Cambodia. The High Commissioner met with the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and conducted a meeting with representatives of Cambodian non-governmental organizations. Thereafter, he met with the interim head of State, H.E. Loy Sim Chheang, and was received by the First Prime Minister, HRH Prince Norodom Ranariddh. The First Prime Minister confirmed his Government's support for the High Commissioner and for the activities of the office of the Centre for Human Rights in Cambodia. The High Commissioner was also able to raise certain human rights matters with the First Prime Minister. The High Commissioner also visited the office of the Centre for Human Rights in Phnom Penh and met with the representatives of international organizations in Cambodia.

Indonesia

21. The Centre for Human Rights provided financial support to the organization by the National Human Rights Commission of Indonesia of the Second National Workshop on Human Rights, held at Jakarta, from 24 to 26 October 1994. The workshop took place at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was officially opened by H.E. President Suharto. One senior official from the Centre for Human Rights, as well as two international experts, sponsored by the Centre, served as resource persons for the workshop. The workshop is expected to lead to a National Action Plan for Human Rights to strengthen the promotion and protection of human rights in Indonesia.

22. The workshop brought together some 300 officials from various government sectors from all parts of the country, as well as representatives of non-governmental organizations, professional organizations and personnel of the police and the armed forces. The agenda focused on Indonesia's policy in regard to international human rights obligations, the implication of ratification of international human rights instruments, reconciling national legislation and policies with these instruments, and measures for the promotion of human rights through education and awareness building.

Japan

23. From 20 to 23 July 1994, the High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Japan. During his visit, he met, among others, Prime Minister Tomiichi Murayama, with whom the High Commissioner discussed cooperation between the Centre and Japan, and Japan's support to the human rights programme of the United Nations. The High Commissioner also visited the United Nations University (UNU) at Tokyo, where he met with senior officials to discuss cooperation between the Centre for Human Rights and UNU in the field of promotional, educational and training activities in human rights. The High Commissioner also met the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Justice and the Diet (Parliamentary) Association for Cooperation with United Nations Human Rights Activities. He also had a meeting with representatives of a number of Japanese non-governmental organizations.

Mongolia

24. As a follow-up to the original request of the Government of Mongolia in 1991 and the needs assessment that the Centre for Human Rights conducted in Mongolia in 1992, the Centre developed a programme of technical cooperation with Mongolia of three years' duration. In order to update the information gathered during the needs assessment, two officials of the Centre conducted a consultation mission with the Mongolian authorities from 26 September to 2 October 1994, which served to finalize the programme and set a clear calendar for future activities. The first activity under the comprehensive programme was a mission by an international expert to Mongolia, from 13 to 20 November 1994, to assess the requirements for the establishment of a library for the Supreme Court of that country. The next activity under the programme is scheduled to take place in February 1995 and will consist of a training course on the administration of justice and the independence of the judiciary, aimed at judges, lawyers and procurators. The programme also foresees the stationing for one year of a human rights officer in Ulaanbataar to coordinate the implementation of the programme with the Government.

Nepal

25. From 31 July to 3 August 1994, the High Commissioner for Human Rights visited the Kingdom of Nepal. The High Commissioner met with a number of government officials, including the Prime Minister, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Minister for Home Affairs. During these consultations, the Nepalese Government made a formal request for technical cooperation with the Centre for Human Rights, for which the Centre is currently developing a programme.

26. During his visit, the High Commissioner also conducted a meeting with representatives of national non-governmental organizations, and was able to take note of their views on the present human rights situation in the country. The High Commissioner was also received by His Majesty the King of Nepal. On 2 August 1994, the High Commissioner visited Goldhap and Beldangi Refugee Camps in south-east Nepal, which are run by UNHCR. At the camps, he received a number of oral and written petitions addressed to him by camp residents who appealed to him to expedite their return to Bhutan.

Republic of Korea

27. On the occasion of the organization by the Centre for Human Rights and the Government of the Republic of Korea of the third United Nations Workshop for the Asian and Pacific Region on Human Rights Issues, the High Commissioner for Human Rights visited the Republic of Korea from 17 to 20 July 1994. The High Commissioner met with President Kim Young Sam and discussed the progress achieved in the field of human rights since the installation of the civilian Government. They also addressed possible areas for further action to strengthen the protection of human rights in the Republic of Korea. During his visit, the High Commissioner also met with, among others, representatives of Korean non-governmental organizations and visited the Institute of Asian Studies at Korea University.

C. Activities by non-governmental organizations for the protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region

28. From 19 to 25 June 1994, the Friedrich Naumann Foundation organized a Conference on Regional Systems for the Protection of Human Rights in Asia, Africa, in the Americas and in Europe. The conference took place at Strasbourg and was organized in cooperation with the European Commission of Human Rights. Participants included individuals from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, the Council of Europe, the European Commission of Human Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, the African Commission on Human and People's Rights, the Centre for Justice and International Law and the International Commission of Jurists. A staff member of the Centre for Human Rights served on the panel of resource persons for the conference.

29. Whereas the conference addressed all regional systems as well as general promotion and protection of human rights, the programme to a large extent focused on the possible establishment of a regional system for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region. A full report on the proceedings of the conference is expected to be issued at the end of 1994 by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation.

Annex I

STATUS OF RATIFICATIONS BY STATES OF THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION OF THE PRINCIPAL INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS INSTRUMENTS (as at 15 November 1994)

1. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

3. Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

4. Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights aiming at the abolition of the death penalty.

5. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.

6. International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid.

7. Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide.

8. Convention on the Rights of the Child.

9. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

10. Convention on the Political Rights of Women.

11. Convention on the Nationality of Married Women.

12. Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

13. Convention relating to the Status of Refugees.

14. Protocol relating to the Status of Refugees.

15. International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families.

STATES	RATIFICATIONS														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Afghanistan	x	x			x	x	x	x		x		x			
Australia	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Bahrain					x	x	x	x							
Bangladesh					x	x		x	x						
Bhutan								x	x						
Brunei Darussalam															
Cambodia	x	x			x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	
China					x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x	
Democratic People's Rep. of Korea	x	x					x	x							
Fiji					x		x	x		x	x		x	x	
India	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x					
Indonesia								x	x	x					
Iran (Islamic Republic of)	x	x			x	x	x	x					x	x	
Iraq	x	x			x	x	x	x	x						
Israel	x	x			x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Japan	x	x						x	x	x			x	x	
Jordan	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			
Kiribati															
Kuwait					x	x		x	x						
Lao People's Democratic Republic					x	x	x	x	x	x					
Lebanon	x	x			x		x	x		x					
Malaysia											x				
Maldives					x	x	x	x	x						
Marshall Islands								x							
Micronesia, Federated States of								x							
Mongolia	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x					
Myanmar							x	x							
Nauru								x							

STATES	RATIFICATIONS														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Nepal	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x			
New Zealand	x	xa/	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	xb/	x	x	
Oman						x									
Pakistan					x	x	x	x		x					
Papua New Guinea					x		x	x		x			x	x	
Philippines	x	xa/	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
Qatar					x	x									
Republic of Korea	x	xa/	x		x		x	x	x	x			x	x	
Samoa									x				x		
Saudi Arabia							x								
Singapore											x				
Solomon Islands	x				x					x					
Sri Lanka	x	xa/			x	x	x	x	x		x	x			
Syrian Arab Republic	x	x			x	x	x	x							
Thailand								x	x	x					
Tonga					x		x								
Tuvalu													x	x	
United Arab Emirates					x	x									
Vanuatu								x							
Viet Nam	x	x			x	x	x	x	x						
Yemen	x	x			x	xc/	x	x	x	x		x	xc/	xc/	
Number of States parties	21	20	6	2	31	23	29	37	24	20	8	11	14	13	0

a/ Declaration recognizing the competence of the Human Rights Committee under article 41 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

b/ Declaration recognizing the competence of the Committee against Torture under articles 21 and 22 of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

c/ Ratification, accession, approval, notification of succession acceptance or definitive signature which has been given only by the former Republic of Yemen.

Annex II

**THIRD UNITED NATIONS WORKSHOP FOR
THE ASIAN AND PACIFIC REGION ON HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES
(Seoul, 18-20 July 1994)**

CONCLUDING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN

During this workshop, we have been able to engage in frank discussions and to exchange our views and ideas. As I look at this gathering, it is a true reflection of the diversity of the Asian and Pacific Region. At the same time, you have shown your real willingness to reach broad common ground on a number of important issues. If I look at the concluding remarks of the Chairman of the 1993 Asian and Pacific workshop in Jakarta, I must conclude that you have not only reaffirmed the principles agreed upon at that workshop, but managed to achieve considerable progress in several areas.

The workshop has unequivocally reaffirmed that all human rights are universal, indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. The workshop has also reaffirmed the importance of ensuring universality, objectivity and non-selectivity in the consideration of human rights issues. The workshop has further recognized that the key to enhancing the human rights environment in countries in Asia and the Pacific lies in the strengthening of implementation at the national level. In this regard, the diverse cultural, historical and political particularities and the different levels of development in the region do indeed play a significant role. Yet these same differences give the region its unique character and, in recognizing this, and in mutual respect therefor among Asian and Pacific nations, lie the foundation and opportunity for regional cooperation in the field of human rights. Indeed, in the very diversity of the region lies its strength.

The topic of a regional human rights arrangement for Asia and the Pacific featured prominently on the agenda of this workshop. A preference was expressed for the development of a regional arrangement through a step-by-step approach, referred to in our discussions as the evolutionary model. This building-block approach recognizes that there are different "speeds" in the region. Through subregional initiatives such as those in the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), broader regional cooperation and information exchange in the field of human rights should evolve. While subregional initiatives develop, a regional forum such as this workshop, other conferences and consultations may enable all countries of the region to benefit from such developments. The workshop recognizes this, and therefore welcomes the proposal made by His Excellency Mr. Han Sung-Joo, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Korea, that a human rights forum for the Asian and Pacific region such as this one, be convened on a regular basis, which would facilitate the exchange of ideas and information regarding matters of common interest in the field of human rights. Through dialogue and cooperation, this would serve to broaden the common understanding of human rights issues among nations of the region.

The workshop recognizes that the continued involvement of the United Nations remains of particular importance. Accordingly, taking into consideration that three workshops have now been organized - and, I think I may say, successfully so - and in view of the need for an evolutionary approach in the development of a regional human rights arrangement, it is agreed that workshops such as the present one should be organized regularly, if possible annually, in the Asian and Pacific region. In this connection, the workshop noted the proposal that subsequent workshops be called: "United Nations Forum for the Asian and Pacific region on Human Rights Issues".

This workshop also reviewed the development of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights in the Asian and Pacific region. As I said earlier, the workshop recognizes the crucial importance of the implementation of human rights at the national level. The important role that such national institutions can play in the strengthening of human rights in society on a collective and individual basis, and in applying universal standards of human rights in different societies, is recognized. In this regard, the workshop reaffirmed the principle contained in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action that it is the right of each State to choose the framework which is best suited to its particular needs at the national level. It was noted that Asian and Pacific countries have developed a number of models of national institutions in accordance with their own national conditions. The workshop further welcomed the recent decisions of several States in the region to establish, or to consider establishing, national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. In view of the above, the workshop encourages the establishment and strengthening of national institutions, as outlined in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.

The workshop also discussed several issues relating to the follow-up of the World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in June 1993. They included the desirability of each country in the region drawing up a national action plan for the promotion and protection of human rights, as mentioned in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action; means by which ratification of international human rights instruments could be encouraged; and possibilities for developing strategies for human rights education in the Asian and Pacific region.

The workshop's attention was drawn to the availability of the advisory services and technical assistance programme of the Centre for Human Rights for countries in this region. The workshop calls upon the Centre for Human Rights to provide specific information on programmes available under the Voluntary Fund for Technical Cooperation in the Field of Human Rights, to facilitate better access and fuller utilization by all countries in the Asian and Pacific region.

Future endeavours such as this workshop will require careful and comprehensive preparations, an annotated agenda and analytical papers, which will greatly enhance our effectiveness. The workshop also endorsed that subsequent meetings should be guided by the central objectives outlined in the report of the Jakarta workshop, which are:

(a) To increase awareness among countries of the region of international human rights standards and procedures and of the role of States in implementing human rights norms;

(b) To inform participants of the mechanisms which are available to assist States in fulfilling their obligations under the various international human rights instruments;

(c) To promote bilateral cooperation in the field of human rights between countries of the region;

(d) To foster the development of national human rights institutions in the region;

(e) To provide a forum for discussion of questions relating to the establishment of regional arrangements for protection and promotion of human rights.

In sum, I may conclude that the third Asia and Pacific workshop has been positive in identifying common ground and better understanding among the countries in the region. We have been able to build on the consensus achieved in the 1993 Jakarta workshop and to define further the conditions for regional cooperation in the field of human rights, both in the process towards designing a regional human rights arrangement and in the development of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights by Asian and Pacific countries, as well as in taking stock of the objectives set forth in the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action.